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Supreme Court, in a ruling in February, struck down the Centre's Electoral Bond Scheme (File)



New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh defended the Electoral Bonds scheme, which was recently declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, and said that time will decide the benefits of the scheme, adding that the central government does not regret its decision.

"Time will decide the benefits of the scheme. We do not have any regrets," he said.

When asked about the Supreme Court's allegations of 'quid pro quo', Rajnath Singh said, "If the Supreme Court has taken cognizance, let it decide. We are not against the Supreme court. Whatever they decide, we'll accept it. There are some people who are saying that the names are not being disclosed. Names should be disclosed. So maybe tomorrow the time will come when people will ask who has given votes to whom? This should also be disclosed."

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The Electoral Bond Scheme was a way for political parties in India to get money without revealing the donor's identity. But, the Supreme Court, in a ruling in February, struck down the Centre's Electoral Bond Scheme and ordered the SBI to stop issuing Electoral Bonds immediately.

In compliance with a directive from the Supreme Court, the Election Commission of India (ECI) recently uploaded data on electoral bonds to its official website. The State Bank of India (SBI) supplied the information, which includes details about these electoral bonds.

Speaking on the promises made by Congress of removing the 'Agniveer scheme' that Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed a "game changer," the Union Minister said that the Congress is making such promises because they are aware that they will not be able to form a government.

"They (Congress) know that they are not going to the government. That's why they have made these kinds of promises. Why do they want to end the story? We are selecting the youth of 18 years in the Army and good training is being given to them. Technological training is being provided to them and after four years, if they are well skilled, a certificate will be provided."

"In the paramilitary forces, we have made provision for reservations. But not only in paramilitary forces but also in many other such institutions. Even some private institutions said that they would provide reservations to Agniveers. At the age of 18, they will be admitted, even if they leave after 4 years, they will be 22 years old, right? After this, they can sit in on the Union Public Service Commission competition and many other competitions. This is indeed an attempt to mislead the soldiers of the country. The scheme has been started keeping in mind the interests of the youth and their future," he added.

He further questioned the Congress for not doing anything to benefit the soldiers when they were at the helm of affairs for the maximum time.

"Till now, these people (the Congress) haven't done anything that should have been done for the soldiers of this country. We are giving such opportunities to the soldiers. I want to reiterate the point again and also want to tell my Congress friends that politics should not be done for forming the government, but politics should be done for building the nation," Rajnath Singh said.



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In its manifesto for the Lok Sabha polls, Congress has promised to abolish the Agnipath Scheme and return to the normal recruitment processes followed by the Army, Navy and Air Force. "It will guarantee economic and social security for our soldiers," the manifesto read.

(Except for the headline, this story has not been edited by NDTV staff and is published from a syndicated feed.)





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